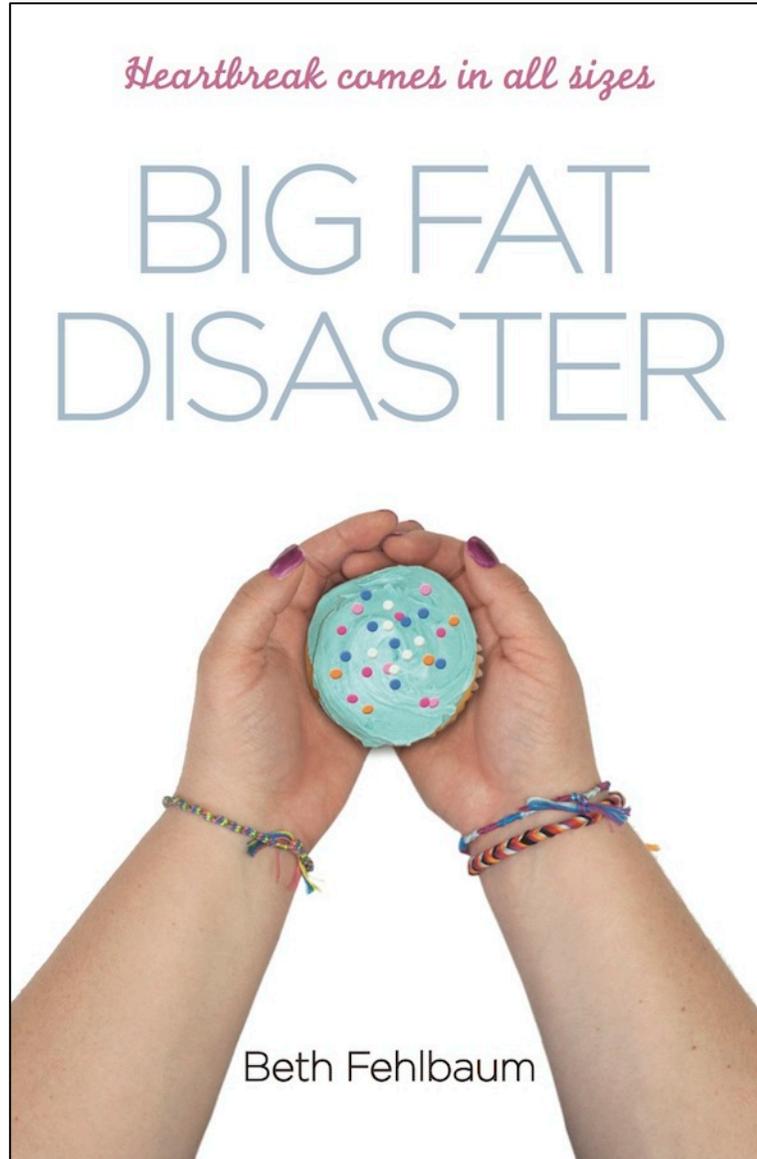


***Big Fat Disaster* by Beth Fehlbaum**

2015-2016 Spirit of Texas Reading List-High School

***TLA Appearances:* Texas Tea, Spirit of Texas Panel**



Big Fat Disaster Synopsis

Colby Denton's family is a "package deal". That's what her dad, a candidate for the U.S. Senate running on a "Family Values" platform, calls his wife, a former Miss Texas, and three daughters: Rachel, Colby, and Drew. Rachel and Drew inherited their mother's traditional beauty, but Colby takes after her father, a linebacker on his college football team.

Colby finds a photo of her father kissing another woman, and within hours, Colby's father admits that he is in love with his mistress. But that's not all he's been up to; he's also been stealing from his campaign, and his investment company has been defrauding investors so that he can support his secret lifestyle.

His wife and daughters are not only the objects of media speculation; they're left homeless, too. The only person willing to provide them a place to live is Colby's eccentric Aunt Leah, resident of Piney Creek, a tiny East Texas town, the black sheep of her image-conscious family, and mother to Ryan, the only player on his football team with the courage to report a girl's sexual assault at a party. His teammates are out for revenge, and Ryan has a grudge against the world.

Piney Creek, Texas is tiny: Kindergarten through 12th grades are in the same building! But the social media network is huge, as Colby discovers. Her mother blames her binge eating and resulting weight problem for attracting negative attention, and Colby is driven to desperate measures. Tragedy ensues, and Colby keeps a secret out of fear that her mother will reject her once more if she finds out the truth.

At last, Colby must confront the truth about the tragedy, her role in the destruction of her family, and the eating disorder that will eventually kill her if she does not learn to cope in other ways.



Applause for *Big Fat Disaster*

BIG FAT DISASTER — KIRKUS [STARRED REVIEW!]

Author: Beth Fehlbaum

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Category: Fiction

Colby's life as the heavy daughter of a disapproving former Miss Texas beauty queen is difficult enough, but it gets worse very quickly once she discovers a photo of her politician father kissing another woman.

She and her mother and little sister move to a trailer in a tiny Texas community. She has an agonizing first day of school crammed into blue jeans so tight that she needs a coat hanger to pull the zipper up—and then she discovers that her cousin made a video of her trying to get into her jeans, which gets posted to Facebook. Colby copes with each terrible event the way she always has, with huge amounts of sweets followed by shame, and spirals ever deeper into depression. Readers experience the events through Colby's present-tense narration, hearing her perceptive take on people: "Mom does that: She nods and smiles even when she thinks the person speaking is full of shit..." Fehlbaum draws a razor-sharp picture of Colby's judgmental grandparents, her quirky teachers and most of all, Colby herself and her terrifying mother, who can't empathize at all. When Colby finally gets help at the end from a therapist and others, Fehlbaum makes it clear that her road ahead will be long and hard.

Colby's experiences, while extreme, ring true, and the fast pace, lively and profane dialogue, and timely topic make it a quick and enjoyable read. (Fiction. 12-16)

From Jennifer Brown, award-winning author:

"As always, I am amazed at the honesty in Beth's writing. The characters in B.F.D. (Big Fat Disaster) sing with truth and reality. Colby's struggle with binge eating, body image, bullying, family dysfunction, and suicide make her the kind of character you want to wrap in a big, messy hug—the kind of character whose journey you want to see through to the end.

What I love most about Beth Fehlbaum's writing is that she comes to the page unafraid every single time she writes. Her writing never has a feeling of hesitation or of looking over her shoulder or holding back. She creates heart-to-heart-style—that is to say, from her heart straight to the heart of her readers. Her characters—the good and the bad—come alive in a way that is rare and beautiful in YA writing, and that speak loud and clear to teens who really, really need to hear what they have to say. B.F.D. (Big Fat Disaster) stays true in this regard, true to that all-important message: Hang in there. You are not alone.

Jennifer Brown, author

HATE LIST

BITTER END

PERFECT ESCAPE

From the co-founder of YAK Fest, Young Adult Keller Book Festival

“...one of my favorite characters was Becca, who lives “in the Light of the Truth”. I love that Colby is so complex and flawed; she stuck with me for a long time after I finished reading. The ending of the book is very empowering and inspiring.”

Lucy Kubo

Librarian, Keller High School, Keller, TX.

Co-Chairman, Young Adult Keller Book Festival Committee

Member, TLA Spirit of Texas Reading Program High School Committee



Beth Fehlbaum is passionate about helping teens find their voices. Whether she’s creating troubled characters in her books that help readers see they’re not alone or guiding her high school students to get what’s in their heads onto a page, Beth is committed to truth-telling and authenticity.

Her books have been respectively honored by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) as a Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers (*Hope in Patience*, 1st ed., 2011) and selected by the Texas Library Association’s Spirit of Texas Reading List-High School (*Big Fat Disaster*, 2015-2016).

A survivor of a traumatic childhood, Beth is an advocate for sexual abuse survivors and speaks to community groups and social service organizations on the importance of hope and resilience.

Social Media Links:

- Website: <http://www.bethfehlbaumbooks.com>
- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/beth.fehlbaum>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/bethfehlbaum>



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School Visits & Event Appearances: visit my website for info:
<http://www.bethfehlbaumbooks.com/school-event-appearances-info/>



I'm so excited to share this news! Beginning early 2017, Leap Books is releasing *The Patience Trilogy*, beginning with *Courage in Patience*.

The Patience Trilogy: Courage, Hope, and Truth

A teen girl, convinced that her world will collapse if she tells the secret she's kept for six years, discovers her inner strength and worthiness when her shameful secret is revealed and she must rebuild her life with the father she has never known.

Fear imprisons her in darkness. Courage frees her to find a life.